

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

FEBRUARY 4TH - 5TH, 2023 // GOSPEL OF JOHN

JOYLESS RELIGION (JOHN 2:1-12) THE FIRST OF SEVEN SIGNS

Knowing that John's purpose for His Gospel is to point people to Jesus so that they could become Christ-followers, John focused on seven "signs," miraculous works of Jesus, that demonstrated that Jesus was indeed God in flesh dwelling with us. John wants people to believe in Jesus and have eternal life.

SO...WHY A WEDDING?

There's a beautiful significance to a wedding being the site of the first miraculous sign of Jesus. The John who is writing this Gospel is the same John who would have a revelation from Jesus about how human history would end.

- **Human history ends with the marriage feast of Jesus and His Church.**

THE PROBLEM OF SHAME

We're not sure why Jesus' mom and Jesus and His disciples were invited, but it seems Mary played some role in the wedding because when the wedding runs out of wine, Mary comes to Jesus for help.

- **Running out of wine would bring incredible shame to the groom's family.**

RUDENESS IN JESUS?

Many think Jesus' response to His mom is rude. But as Jesus begins His public ministry, all His relationships are changed. He's no longer primarily Mary's son; He is beginning His path to the cross as the Savior of the world, including Mary. But it's not His time yet.

- **Mary entrusted the situation to Jesus.**

RELIGIOUS RITUALS

Jewish purification as fulfillment of the Law was a huge deal to the legalistic followers of Judaism. Jesus and His disciples were often questioned over His and their failure to observe these "laws."

- **Most of the time the "laws" weren't of Moses but man-made rituals.**

DEAD RITUALS BECOME JOYFUL CELEBRATIONS

The stone jars meant for ritual washing are filled to the brim with water, not wine. Jesus then tells the servant to take some to the headwaiter, basically the Emcee or the DJ.

- **What could have caused life-long shame to a family becomes a source of overflowing joy for all to enjoy!**

BEST OF ALL ALWAYS

The headwaiter is stunned by the kindness and generosity of the groom to save the best wine for last against the customs of that day. Only a few people knew that Jesus did this, but they saw the glory of Christ and believed.

- We never know when and how Jesus will work, but we must always be ready.

WHAT DOES THIS SIGN TEACH ABOUT JESUS?

Jesus is the Bridegroom pointing us to the **great marriage feast that's coming.**

- He's the Headwaiter bringing **joy** to the feast.
- He turns our **shame into celebration.**
- Empty, joyless religion **turns into rejoicing.**
- The wine in the stone jars points to the wine that **reminds us of Jesus' bloody cross.**

BARRIERS (JOHN 2:13-17)

WORSHIP IS MAN'S GREATEST CALLING

We were created in God's image to reflect Him in all things as our worship of Him.

Throughout history, God has graciously given us aids to help us to worship Him, from the Tabernacle to the Temple to the greatest of all helps we have now: **the Holy Spirit and the**

Word of God.

EAGER TO WORSHIP

The wedding was near the time of Passover, the greatest of the Jewish feasts, which remembered God's deliverance of the Jews from Egypt. Jesus heads to Jerusalem to worship and remember God's goodness.

- Jesus joyfully worshipped His Father; shouldn't we do the same?

HE'S THE LAMB AND THE LION

While Jesus came to be the slain Passover Lamb for sinners, there are times when we are pointed to the fact that Jesus never relinquishes His rule as the Lion, who is the King of Kings and Lord of Lords!

- **Jesus is full of mercy and grace, but He's also the righteous Judge.**

PROHIBITING WORSHIP

When Jesus gets to the Temple, He finds the outer court (the Court of Gentiles) being misused as a place of commerce. The Temple sacrifices required certain kinds/qualities of animals, and the Temple tax required a certain coin. The merchants provided these things, at a profit, of course!

WHAT RIGHTEOUS ANGER LOOKS LIKE

Jesus fashions a whip of cords and literally begins to clean house, His Father's house. Why was Jesus so angry? Because a barrier to worshipping His Father had been erected, especially for the Gentiles who were the farthest away from God. **Anything or anyone who keeps people away angers Jesus!**

ZEAL FOR TRUE WORSHIP

It's no surprise that God would have great zeal for the worship of God! This seems self-serving of Jesus until we remember that's what we were created to do for eternity (Philippians 2:9-11).

- True worship of God comes by the Spirit and by truth (Bible), not by human means.

UNBELIEF (JOHN 2:18-25)

WHO GAVE JESUS THIS AUTHORITY?

The religious leaders asked this very question. How could Jesus call the Temple "My Father's house?" That Jesus did this wasn't as big a deal as His authority to do so. Jesus wasn't ready to reveal Himself, so He spoke about His death and resurrection, which would be the true sign of His authority.

WE NEED HELP TO BELIEVE

When Jesus spoke of "this temple" referring to His own body, even His disciples didn't understand until after the resurrection and with the Spirit's help (Luke 24:44-47).

- **In many ways, the Bible isn't hard to understand, but we need the Spirit's help to truly believe it.**

MANY SEEK SIGNS, FEW SEEK JESUS

John refers to other signs Jesus did while He was in Jerusalem and that many believed in Him. Jesus knows what's really in the hearts of mankind, including their unbelief. Many followed Jesus only for His miracles, but not for Him. **They loved the miracles but not the Man. What about us?**

RELIGION

- Religion cannot remove our shame and guilt, only Jesus can.
- Religion cannot help us have joy in our lives in all things, only Jesus can.
- Religion can't change a heart, only Jesus can.
- **Only Jesus can bring life to dead religion.**

THE CHURCH

- We can never lose our focus on **making followers of Jesus through authentic worship, authentic community, and authentic community service.**
- We must never become distracted by culture's call for us to conform to its desires for what a church should be.
- We can never lose our commitment **to obey all Jesus has commanded** while at the same time opening our doors wide, saying, **"Everyone is welcome."**
- We scatter from this place **letting our lights shine for Jesus so that we live out what we say we believe.**

OUR UNBELIEF

- Some of us question who Jesus is: **Can God really become man, die, and rise again?**
- Some of us see Jesus as only a cosmic vending machine giving us only what we most desire, whether His will or not.
- Some of us know who Jesus is but question whether He can really save us.

ONLY JESUS

- Many of us here are looking for **joy, peace, contentment, acceptance, and purpose. All these are found in Jesus!**
- There are a lot of things at ECC we are not and will never be. But this one thing we have and will always give freely to all who want it, and **that's Jesus!**